

**SOVIET PROPAGANDA DRIVE TO DENY FISSIONABLE MATERIALS
IN LATIN AMERICA TO THE US**

Communist propaganda is rapidly being focused on national control of fissionable materials with the object of withholding them from US acquisition. In Latin America this propaganda is directed largely toward Brazil, Mexico and Argentina.

Brazil has the largest production of fissionable materials in Latin America. Particularly important are the deposits of monazite sands, source of thorium, which are found only in India and Brazil. This fact has special significance in view of the recent announcement by the Japanese scientist, Prof. Seitaro Koyama, that a radioactive fallout over isolated areas of Japan indicated the Soviets have exploded a hydrogen bomb containing thorium, a cheaper and more deadly radioactive substance than uranium.

Brazilian Communists have integrated their drive to promote national control of exports of fissionable materials with their campaign to expand trade and diplomatic relations with the Soviet bloc. This tactic has been followed for the past year. In March 1955, they collected signatures in an appeal against preparation for atomic war. Simultaneously, the Central Committee of the Brazilian Communist Party instructed the party to support and control certain congresses, among them a Congress for the Defense of Manganese and Radioactive Minerals. On 9 March 1956, a "popular mass meeting" was held in Rio de Janeiro. While its program included such varied themes as "autonomy for the Federal District" and "pacification of the Brazilian family," its primary objectives were to exert pressure for expanded trade and diplomatic relations with the Soviet bloc, and to influence Congressional action towards a ban on the export of atomic minerals. There is also a current Communist campaign to create an entity to be called Atombras. The similarity of name with that of Petrobras, the Brazilian government agency for control of petroleum development, indicates the Communist intention to conduct a propaganda program regarding atomic materials similar to their campaign to influence Petrobras against US participation in petroleum development in Brazil.

The current propaganda program apparently was carefully timed in anticipation of congressional consideration of the US-Brazil wheat and thorium barter agreement now under discussion. As in the case of petroleum, Communists and ultra nationalists follow parallel lines in their campaigns to protect atomic energy resources from US exploitation. Apparently the Communists

are a little ahead in this and have been planting propaganda which the ultra nationalists also use without regard for source. Emphasis is currently being given to the testimonies of nuclear scientists and army leaders who oppose the terms of the US-Brazil agreement. Professor Jose Leite Lopes, nuclear physicist and Brazil's representative in Geneva on the Atomic Energy Commission, on 16 April testified in Congress for three hours against the agreement. On 19 April Radio Press of Rio broadcast that "while a kilogram of thorium oxide could be sold for its energy value at around 6,000 dollars, it is being delivered by Brazil to the United States at practically 43 dollars." In the same broadcast Radio Press continued "This contract has not yet been signed, and Col. Edgar Lopes, representative of the Armed Forces Staff on the Atomic Mineral Ore Export Committee, disclosed that the Armed Forces are against signing the agreement."

Soviet propaganda for some time has set the pattern for this propaganda theme. The latest Soviet maneuver is an invitation to ten Brazilian deputies to visit the Soviet Union, European Satellites and Communist China, leaving Brazil on 1 May. To date eight deputies have been named. All eight have been associated with Communist fronts, and three have signed the March 1955 Communist-sponsored appeal against preparation for atomic war. One of the group, Deputy Francisco Saturnino Braga, also signed the manifesto convoking the 9 March 1956 Communist-sponsored rally in Rio referred to in paragraph 3 above. With this background it seems probable that during this trip additional indoctrination will be given on withholding atomic resources from the US. The indoctrination theme likely to be followed is that the US uses these materials for destructive purposes in the manufacture of nuclear weapons, whereas the USSR uses them for medical and industrial development.

Another facet of the problem of Brazilian policy development on the exportation of fissionable materials, thorium in particular, involves India, since Brazil and India are the world suppliers of this substance. India, the larger producer, has been intensifying its thorium exploitation program while at the same time restricting exports, probably with the expectation of establishing a price monopoly. India's traditional neutralist policy would permit exportation of thorium ores to western or eastern markets, depending on price advantage. Brazil thus far has built up a small stockpile of thorium and may well reject the US barter proposal and follow India's example. This possibility is particularly significant in view of the announcement that Nehru will visit Brazil and other Latin American

countries this year. In such an event it is almost certain that the subject of thorium prices and export policy will be discussed. A neutralist policy on Brazilian thorium would satisfy both Communist and nationalist aspirations.

Although Mexico has no atomic mineral production at present, it is considered a potential small producer. An example of how Communist propaganda has directed popular interest toward the subject of radioactive minerals is given in the following case. Several months ago Mexican painter Diego Rivera traveled to Moscow for medical treatment, supposedly for a serious cancer condition. After an operation and treatment with radioactive materials he was pronounced cured and returned to Mexico in March. A large and warm circle of friends greeted him at the airport with speeches and songs of welcome. The ceremony was climaxed by a moving rendition of a corrido proclaiming the Soviet Union's humanitarian use of "cobalt" in his cure, as opposed to the destructive application of the mineral in bombs by the US. It is significant that the word cobalt is chosen for this corrido because of the long-standing familiarity of Mexican artisans and handicraft workers with this mineral. Also significant is the use of the corrido, a traditional ballad form which appeals widely to Mexican popular elements, especially the illiterate. It was a very effective medium of propaganda during the Mexican revolution and was used by the Germans to spread anti-US propaganda during World Wars I and II.

Argentina, which made unsuccessful efforts to develop atomic power under Peron, is undergoing a barrage of Communist propaganda cautioning against exploitation of atomic energy materials along with petroleum by "Yankee capitalists and war mongers." Probably related to this program is the recent invitation proffered by Peiping for a group of 12 Argentine physicians to visit Communist China. Such a delegation would quite likely be subjected to strong doses of propaganda condemning the US for its atomic weapons program and lauding the USSR for its outstanding progress in developing peaceful uses of atomic energy, especially in the field of medicine, possibly citing the case of Diego Rivera as an example.

The underlying motive of the campaign in Brazil, Mexico and Argentina is to create a climate of public opinion which will favor the denial to the US of nuclear energy resources as well as petroleum. Ultra nationalists in all Latin American countries are susceptible to this kind of appeal. Moderate nationalists, motivated by honest patriotism and economic self interest, also are vulnerable targets for this propaganda.